



IT University Travel Report

Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not.

Note that by filling in and sending the report you automatically consent to publishing it on ITU student.

Host university: Auckland University of Technology

Study Programme at IT University: BSc Data Science (I took individual courses from different majors)

Exchange agreement or Free mover: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad:

- **Program Design and Construction/ software construction (same course different names) - COMP603**
- **Information Security Technologies - COMP607**
- **Academic Communication – COMM570**
- **Data Mining and Knowledge Engineering – COMP723 (elective, only DS course)**

Period studying abroad: semester 2, autumn year 2023 (July-November)

If you wish to give advice to other students regarding your travels, please state your contact info here:

alfo@itu.dk please contact me if you have questions, I'm happy to tell you everything about it!!

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at the university (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

I chose the courses by looking at what was available for my semester and what I was supposed to do at ITU. the courses were interesting enough, with different levels of details and notions, depending on what level I was doing. I would suggest asking more information to the person responsible to sign you up for courses, as there are not many details in the paper descriptions for each course.

I had an issue as they did not specify the level of knowledge for the program construction course, so I arrived there knowing nothing of Java, and had to learn everything in 2 weeks to be able to keep up. The course was very interesting, and we learned a lot about actually writing java programs, with a fully functioning project!

Academic communication is the only course that matched technical communication at home, but it is very basic writing. We wrote 3 papers with increased level of academic language, and it is things that we learned on the first semester at ITU in data science in business research and society. Nonetheless it is a fine recap.

Information security technologies was different from what I expected. It listed a bunch of technologies and briefly went through the technical parts of some. Not my favorite course, but we did learn more about basic cryptology, and the exam was easy enough compared to ITU standards.

Data Mining was my elective and only third year level course. It is a quick run through of different ML models and a very, very quick run through of NLP, on which we had to do the final project. Easy enough as I just finished the NLP course at ITU, but quite the load of information. The teacher is very engaging though, so that was a plus! The mid semester test was a handful, but it is generally my favorite course of the Semester.

I had to choose courses that would match the ITU ones, but they are not tailored towards DS, like they are at ITU, which meant that a lot of things seem quite different from what we would need to learn. I definitely learned a lot about java, maybe more than what was expected for ITU, but it was a rather interesting course if you know how to code already. I didn't, but both the teacher and the TAs were very helpful in supporting me while learning.

All the courses expect you to go to the labs every week, and they have mandatory weekly exercises that count towards the final grade. This means less stress at the end, but a lot of stuff to do during the semester. They also have a rubric of what it is expected of you for each exam, and what grade you would get, based on your efforts. I did put some effort into all of my exams, even if I only needed to pass, and I was rewarded with high grades in all courses. I think that it felt easier to get high grades here compared to ITU, as the grade is based on the effort of the whole semester.

You are also expected to attend all the lectures and exercises and they take attendance.

For social life, I met a lot of people from my dorm, and a few people in the different courses. As I was taking courses of different majors, I did not have the chance of seeing the same people all the time, and a lot of people run away as soon as the lecture ends, so I mainly made friends with people in the dorm. They had an intro day before we started, that showed the campus and what we were supposed to know about it, but there isn't much help from AUT to meet other people. It is a huge uni compared to ITU, so it would be a lot more difficult for them. I joined one organization, AUT Offgrid, that organizes trips around the island and climbing sessions etc. the people are very friendly and always happy to get to know someone from abroad. I would suggest finding an organization that meets your interests, and meet people that way!

There are a lot of foreigner students, from all over the world, so you get to meet a lot of people and cultures!

Kiwis are always proud of their country and natural beauty, so if you met someone maybe they will be willing to show you around the place. I met people that came on a tripe with me to visit the South Island, and that was just amazing.

I travelled a lot while here. I took a week trip to the South Island during the semester break, and a five-week road trip to North and South Island at the end of the semester. I absolutely recommend doing that! It is warm enough at the end of the semester that you can go in a tent and camp around, and the places are beautiful! Just contact me for more info, but absolutely travel as much as you can, as the place is amazingly beautiful.

I tried to go places during the weekends too, as I decided I would not study during that time, and I was able to see quite a bit of Auckland and around.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations? + Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

I did an exchange year in high school and wanted to repeat the experience in uni. I chose NZ as I had always been attracted to it, and there are no deadly spiders! Best decision ever. The university is very different from what I am used to, and it took some time to settle in. I decided to come here also to experience the university life, so I am happy of the outcome, but I think I prefer ITU. Nonetheless, I had to try it!

Coming here I had no expectations, so I'm happy of the outcome.

I think I got a lot out of this experience, I learned about myself and how to deal with being on the other side of the planet without any help. It was a first for me, so it was interesting to see how I would deal with it. Turns out, pretty well. I got to contact people from the department of conservation to write my bachelor project, so I was able to choose a project and topic that interests me, while helping them, so I think that will have a very positive impact on my academic life.

I learned a lot about different university styles and how I want to conduct myself academically from now on, so I think that coming here and experience this was very positive on that side.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

I was offered a spot at one of the dorms, on the other side of the street from the campus, and I took the opportunity. The place is called WSA (Wellesley student apartments) and it gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of people that also stayed in the building. I applied on the AUT website and everything went smoothly. I got to live with people from different places in the world, and learned how to deal with them and their habits, which was an interesting experience. If you know someone that will also go there, I might suggest asking to live together, as it is a 5 people apartment, and a familiar face might be nice.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

I followed AUT's recommendations, and it turned out pretty well. The rest I arranged while arriving here, such as bank account etc. I asked for help with the Bureaucracy to the exchange coordinator, and she was very helpful too. Also, the person dealing with the exchange people from AUT was very helpful!

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

Online. I googled some things but the only thing I had to do was finding accommodation.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

The dorm room was quite expensive I think. It is 6000 NZD for a semester (24.000 dkk) to pay upfront, so quite the expense, but the general life is cheaper than Denmark. Fresh vegetables can be quite expensive, but I overall ate quite healthy with 150nzd every 1 -2 weeks. Transportation is very cheap if you are 24 or under, and still pretty cheap if you are above 25.

The flight coming here is quite expensive, but if you buy it in advance, it is doable. And the visa cost is also to be considered. The expenses before departing can be steep, but once here it is cheaper than DK. A beer goes from 8\$ to 15\$, so CPH prices.

Travelling is quite cheap if you stay in a tent and campsite. The cars can be rented from local companies for 300-600NZD a week, and the stay is 20nzd a night (80dkk). If you travel in a group, it becomes quite affordable, and it is very fun.

Did you apply for scholarships, and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I got a 10.000dkk scholarship from "Lemvig-Müller Fonden", which definitely helped with expenses from travel to everyday life. It was the only one I was eligible for, so I am very happy to have gotten it.

Recommendations for other students:

write me if you want more info and I'm happy to drink a coffee and talk about it.

Travel as much as you can and do whatever you feel like doing of activities, as it helps meeting new people that you can travel with. If you don't like sharing apartments, maybe WSA isn't the best, but it definitely is in a great location and helped me meeting a lot of people!

Remember to always ask for what you need, to the people at ITU, AUT, WSA etc. The vast majority of people I met are super helpful and ready to give you a hand and help you solve problems.

I used student counselling at AUT, and it was very helpful to stay on top of everything!

NZ is different from DK, and beautiful in a very different way. It was difficult to be on the other side of the planet, absolutely, but also worth it. The time difference was 10,11 and 12 hours, depending on daylight saving changes.

There could probably be a book to write about everything, so contact me if you need!

I have too many pictures to choose which ones to show, but the nature is absolutely amazing!

Most importantly, have fun!